Report of the Accreditation Visiting Team

# Layton Christian Academy 2353 East Highway 193 Layton, Utah 84040

**September 23, 2004** 





Utah State Office of Education

250 East 500 South P.O. Box 144200 Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

# THE REPORT OF THE VISITING TEAM REVIEWING

### **Layton Christian Academy**

2353 East Highway 193 Layton, Utah 84040

**September 23, 2004** 

#### UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Patti Harrington, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

# DIVISION OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL SUCCESS

**Christine Kearl, Associate Superintendent** 

**Brett Moulding, Director Curriculum and Instruction** 

Georgia Loutensock, Accreditation Specialist Curriculum and Instruction

Salt Lake City, Utah

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	ii
Utah State Board of Education	iii
Layton Christian Academy Administration and Staff	1
Layton Christian Academy Mission Statement and Belief Statements	2
Members of the Visiting Team	4
Visiting Team Report	5
Chapter 1: School Profile	5
Chapter 2: The Self-Study Process	6
Chapter 3: Instructional and Organizational Effectiveness	7
Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals	8
Curriculum Development	8
Quality Instructional Design	9
Quality Assessment Systems	10
Leadership for School Improvement	11
Community Building	12
Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning	13
Chapter 4: Northwest Association of Accredited Schools (NAAS) Standards I-XI	13
Chapter 5: School Improvement Efforts – Action Plan	15
Chapter 6: Major Commendations and Recommendations of the Visiting Team	16

#### **FOREWORD**

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, September 23, 2004, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Layton Christian Academy is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the visiting team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Joe Detzner is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Layton Christian Academy, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at Layton Christian Academy.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D. State Superintendent of Public Instruction

#### UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

250 East 500 South P. O. Box 144200 Salt Lake City, UT 84114-4200

District 1

Teresa L. Theurer 66 Canterbury Circle Logan, UT 84321 Phone: (435) 753-0740

District 2

Greg W. Haws 5841 West 4600 South Hooper, UT 84315 Phone: (801) 985-7980

District 3

Edward Dalton 1323 Bryan Road Erda, UT 84074 Phone: (435) 882-4498

**District 4** 

Joyce W. Richards 930 East 5000 South Ogden, UT 84403 Phone: (801) 479-5370

District 5

Kim R. Burningham 932 Canyon Crest Drive Bountiful, UT 84010 Phone: (801) 292-9261 **District 6** 

Tim Beagley 3974 South 3550 West West Valley City, UT 84119 Phone: (801) 969-6454

District 7

John C. Pingree 1389 Harvard Avenue Salt Lake City, UT 84105 Phone: (801) 582-5635

**District 8** 

Janet A. Cannon 5256 Holladay Blvd. Salt Lake City, UT 84117 Phone: (801) 272-3516

**District 9** 

Gary C. Swensen 1101 Framewood Ln Taylorsville, UT 84123 Phone: (801) 281-8746

District 10

Laurel Brown 5311 South Lucky Clover Ln Murray, UT 84123 Phone: (801) 261-4221 District 11

David L. Moss 1964 Hawk Circle Sandy, UT 84092 Phone: (801) 572-6144

District 12

Mike Anderson 455 East 200 North Lindon, UT 84042 Phone: (801) 785-1212

**District 13** 

Linnea S. Barney 1965 South Main Street Orem, UT 84058 Phone: (801) 225-4149

District 14

Dixie Allen 218 West 5250 North Vernal, UT 84078 Phone: (435) 789-0534

District 15

Debra G. Roberts Box 1780 Beaver, UT 84713 Phone: (435) 438-5843

**Bonnie Jean Beesley\*** 

1492 East Kristianna Cir. Salt Lake City, UT 84103 Phone: (801) 359-0295

**Patti Harrington** 

**Executive Officer** 

\*Board of Regents Appointments

Sara V. Sinclair\*

1340 North 1500 East Logan, UT 84341-2851 Phone: (435) 754-0216

Twila B. Affleck

Secretary

8/1/2004

### **LAYTON CHRISTIAN ACADEMY**

### **ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF**

### **School Administration**

Greg Miller	High School Principal		
Counseling			
Joanna Fletcher			
<u>Faculty</u>			
Donald Brown	Technology		
David Cunningham	Psychology		
Robin Elmy	Mathematics		
Jonathan Jones			
Ana Kinkade	Spanish		
Anne Lewis	Science		
Leah Marie McPheron	Language, Science		
Joy Nakaishi	Physical Education		
Paul Parker	History		
Glen Percifield	Language Arts		
Natalie Roberts	Language Arts, History		
Ryndee Rooy	Literature, Spelling		
Larry Smith			
Karen Tarver			
Beth Williams			
Heather Wrobel	Mathematics, Science		

#### **LAYTON CHRISTIAN ACADEMY**

#### MISSION STATEMENT

Layton Christian Academy's mission is to provide a multicultural, nurturing, yet academically challenging, biblically based, social and spiritual environment where minds can be taught and spirits can be molded to produce students who are equipped to transform their world.

#### **SLOGAN**

Teach the mind Mold the spirit Transform the world

#### **GOALS**

To provide an opportunity for students to learn in an environment which supports and encourages their Christian beliefs.

To provide an opportunity for students to learn in an environment which allows them to regroup and start a fresh as an individual and make new goals and aspirations in their lives.

#### **BELIEF STATEMENTS**

#### MULTICULTURAL

Each student must be valued as an individual with unique God-given physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual qualities.

#### **NUTURING**

Teachers must have both a passion for their students and their subjects. Discipline should not be viewed as merely punishment but as a means to teach and improve behavior.

#### ACADEMICALLY CHALLENGING

Basic academic skills (reading comprehension, critical thinking and communication) of the core curriculum are foundational for successful learning.

Students should be prepared for complex thinking, effective communication, responsible citizenship, cooperative actions, employability, and ethical behavior.

To learn you must want to be taught.

Our commitment to continuous improvement is imperative if Layton Christian Academy is going to produce confident, self-directed, life-long learners.

Knowledge produces respect and authority

### **BIBLICALLY BASED**

The Word of God is foundational and vital for molding the spirit.
You can't maximize your life unless you know who you are in God.
There is no hidden agenda: the primary goal is to develop Christian character with opportunities for worship, prayer, ministry, and interaction with GOD, on a life long journey to become more Christ-like.

### MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Betsy Hunt, Longview Elementary School, Murray School District, Visiting Team Chairperson

Sara Allen, Weber High School, Weber County School District

Lori Rasmussen, Weber County School District

# LAYTON CHRISTIAN ACADEMY VISITING TEAM REPORT

**CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE** 

Layton Christian Academy is located in Layton, Utah. The largest employer in the area is Hill Air Force Base. The base has had a major influence on the atmosphere and expectations of the school. The school population is very mobile, and students come and go on a regular basis. This has both positive and negative impacts on the school. The positive aspect is the constant influx of students that gives the school an exciting atmosphere; however, families can move on very short notice, which interrupts friendships and the school routine.

The typical Christian school's goal is to provide an education in a setting that serves as a "greenhouse" to shield the students from the harmful aspects of society, and to provide an education that complements their Christian beliefs. In addition to this philosophy, Layton Christian Academy provides a safety net for those students who need an opportunity to "regroup" or start over after making poor decisions in the past. One of the incredible strengths of the school is the unusual racial, religious, and even socioeconomic diversity.

a) What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of their profile?

The perception of the stakeholders is generally quite positive. The stakeholders appreciate the balance of academics and extracurricular activities at the school. The faculty and staff are very much respected, and are believed to serve above and beyond the call of duty. It is obvious that Layton Christian Academy provides many opportunities for students to extend their learning experiences in the areas of academics, athletics, fine arts, state competitions, and community service. There is excellent communication between school and home, and the faculty shows great care and respect for all students. The administration is very supportive of the faculty and staff.

One area of concern is the limited space for academic instruction, physical education, and fine arts. In addition, the staff is in need of copiers, computers and printers, and other teaching materials. Another area of concern is the need for specialty/elective class offerings, as well as a special education teacher. It is evident from the report that the administrator, faculty, staff, and parents make every effort to support the educational, spiritual, athletic, and social aspect of the program and have a very strong commitment to the students at Layton Christian Academy.

b) What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?

Layton Christian Academy should continue its efforts to systematically collect and analyze pertinent student data to guide decisions made by the school. It is further suggested that the faculty continue to adhere to the Utah State Core Curriculum and high academic standards for all students. The adoption and implementation of a schoolwide discipline plan and dress code is recommended for future discussion. The staff has done a very good job of including essential data in the profile with honest reflection, and looking toward future challenges with school expansion, academic excellence, etc. The Visiting Team is confident that school will continue to gather pertinent data to update and make corrections to the plan.

#### **CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS**

a) To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?

There appears to have been a high level of interest and participation among students, teachers, administrators, and parents in the process of developing the self-study. Interviews with parents and students made it clear that the entire school community was invited to participate in the accreditation process. The fact that the staff members used the process to drive their work in curriculum instruction and assessment is an indication of their understanding of the new accreditation process.

b) To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?

One of the major strengths of the document was the candor of the staff and community in their reflection. The members of Layton Christian Academy's learning community recognize their limitations in course offerings. They are using Internet resources to offer students a greater variety of classes. They did a thorough job of assessing the school focus group evaluation and academic department reports for curriculum effectiveness.

# CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Layton Christian Academy's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

It is the responsibility and goal of the entire Layton Christian Academy community (students, staff, parents, and partners) that every Layton Christian Academy graduate will be:

- 1. AN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR is one who is able to effectively interact with others and present thoughts and feelings clearly through oral, written, artistic, mathematical and technological forms of expression. They use various communication methods by gathering, developing and communicating ideas based on the Layton Christian Academy core academic, athletic, and activity curriculum.
- 2. A RESPONSIBLE CITIZEN is one who is capable of taking not only personal responsibilities but also helping others to achieve and live a productive life. They understand the function of both non-governmental organizations and federal, state and local governments and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and the importance of active community involvement.
- 3. A RESOURCEFUL THINKER is one who uses complex, critical and creative thinking processes in a variety of personal, social, educational, and career related activities. They are able to solve complex problems independently and collaboratively.
- 4. A LIFE LONG LEARNER is one who has gained basic knowledge and developed the individual learning skills that support envisioning, establishing, and executing personal goals; continuous education; encourage effective participation in a democratic society; maximize employment opportunities; and perseveres in difficult situations. They rely on God who is the source of all knowledge and wisdom.
- 5. A SERVANT LEADER is one who has love, compassion, and desire to assist those in need (Phil 2:5-11). They can teach the gospel, not only through their lifestyle, but through personal communication based on biblical principles. They will strive for Godly character and ethical behavior based on the teachings of the Bible.

#### **Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:**

a) To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?

The collaborative effort to build a shared vision for the school has been inclusive of all vested groups in the school community. The Executive Committee demonstrated much initiative as they underwent training for the new accreditation process. The administration and faculty met on several occasions to develop a mission and goals for the school. The Blueprint for the Future Committee was given several opportunities to make comments and help shape the desired results for student learning. Students were also given opportunity to identify goals and provide input. Teachers were involved in leadership roles and took very active roles in the development of the profile and determination of the DRSLs in action.

b) To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?

The core beliefs of the school reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success as follows: Each student is valued as an individual, and teachers show great concern for students. Each student should be academically challenged as a complex thinker and self-directed learner. The development of Christian character is a primary goal for all students at Layton Christian Academy.

c) To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?

There is clear alignment among the school's mission, beliefs, and DRSLs. The mission, beliefs, and DRSLs reflect the school's commitment to the needs of all students within each subject area. The teachers have developed a plan to articulate and integrate the DRSLs into the various facets of the curriculum.

#### **Curriculum Development:**

a) To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure that the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?

The curriculum in all classes is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum. Physical Education has some limitations with regard to the Core Curriculum because of the lack of physical space in the school.

Members of the staff have indicated that they meet with their academic teams and discuss the integration of curriculum across the departments. The Visiting Team encourages the teachers to continue discussion between departments on best practices, and in particular the implementation of integrated curriculum.

It is suggested by the Visiting Team that time be set aside each week for a team planning period, during which teachers may work collectively on curriculum issues and continue to discuss the implementation of the desired results of student learning.

The Visiting Team recommends an evaluation process to ensure that the curriculum is clearly defined and meets the Utah Core Standards. Articulation of the curriculum requires a singular approach (i.e., individuals talking), along with dialogue occurring at the department and interdepartmental levels.

b) To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?

As written in the study and clearly articulated by each department, the curriculum strategies are aligned with the desired results for student learning. In each subject analysis, the teacher teams have clearly indicated how specific activities are aligned with the DRSLs. The teaching staff has clear evidence of projects, speeches, field trips, critical thinking opportunities, debates, special classes, community and school service projects, etc. There is also ample evidence of DRSLs as they relate to the Core Curriculum.

#### **Quality Instructional Design:**

a) To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?

It was evident that the professional staff individually (and, in some cases, collectively) designs and demonstrates a variety of effective instructional strategies that not only actively engage students but also addresses a variety of student learning styles.

b) To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?

It was observed that the professional staff employed several instructional strategies, including cooperative learning, individual instruction, direct instruction, peer tutoring, Socratic questioning, and games. The Visiting Team felt the staff was aware of and meeting the learning styles and needs of the students. The Visiting Team recommends that special education be established as a priority

to meet the needs of students who fall under the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act).

c) To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?

The staff has incorporated various program and services—such as after-school tutoring, SOS (Switch on School), concurrent enrollment, ACT prep classes, career and guidance curriculum, athletics, college visits, scholarship fairs, and various field trips—to expose the students to different cultures and possible careers. The Visiting Team commends the staff on offering additional opportunities that enhance the educational opportunities for student learning.

#### **Quality Assessment Systems:**

a) To what extent has the staff developed classroom or schoolwide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?

Clearly articulated expectations have been identified schoolwide with the DRSLs. The staff has done a great job of identifying and developing such instruments, thus providing needed feedback as to the success of DRSL implementation. The Visiting Team recommends that the staff carry out its stated intent to disaggregate and analyze the data derived from standardized tests, using this information to drive decision making.

b) To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?

There is strong evidence to support the notion that this staff has developed an understanding of and appreciation for the importance of using multiple assessments in evaluating student performance. Such an understanding is vital if student performance is to be assessed accurately and fairly and if valid/reliable feedback is to be provided to stakeholders. The report and observations have clearly defined performance standards and have attempted to align appropriate assessment instruments to those performance standards.

c) To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?

It is very evident, based on feedback from students and parents, that the staff is dedicated to creating a safe and nurturing environment at Layton Christian Academy. Consistent with this, the Visiting Team is confident that this staff is committed to fair and equitable assessment of student performance. As the staff continues to utilize multiple assessments and further refine the process of

concisely identifying performance standards, aligning appropriate assessment instruments to those standards, equity and fairness are further assured.

#### **Leadership for School Improvement:**

- a) To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?
  - The leadership makes a concerted effort to apply all existing resources of time, money, and personnel to implement effective staff development and support. The leadership encourages "best practices" in education; it is also very proactive and involved in all educational aspects of the school.
- b) To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?
  - The leadership at Layton Christian Academy made a sincere effort to survey both parents and students before determining what school improvement goals to include in the action plan. The data did reveal some problem areas to be addressed. It is suggested that the leadership at the school continue to extend and refine its data collection efforts and inquiry into effective practices. The seven NSSE rubrics, in addition to the study of best practices by all classroom teachers, would provide a common focus and language for future improvement efforts.
- c) To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?
  - The staff has been encouraged to monitor student achievement as a result of evaluation efforts such as Think Wave, midterms, quarterly grades, and standardized tests. It is suggested that the staff continue to make decisions that move in a positive direction and are based upon accurate data. The administrative staff is knowledgeable and energetic in its pursuit of implementation of an effective continuous improvement model based on a data-driven action plan.
- d) To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?
  - Teaching staff, parents, and students strongly commended the leadership for the creation of a safe and positive learning environment. They stated that the leadership has created a sense of genuine pride for students who attend Layton Christian Academy. All indications were that this was a school where students were safe, and a school that offers a rigorous and comprehensive educational program.

e) To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?

As stated earlier in this report, one of the major strengths of the school is the alignment of resources with school improvement efforts. The leadership has created a learning community of adults that mirrors its efforts to establish a learning environment for students in the classroom.

f) To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?

The leadership has consciously established schoolwide structures such as the grade level teams to ensure that the entire community shares responsibility for groups of students. They have communicated to parents and the community at large that their input and participation is important to the success to the school. Parent and student interviews made it clear that they feel an affinity for the school and share in the responsibility for the success of Layton Christian Academy.

#### **Community Building:**

a) To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?

The Visiting Team recognizes the positive and productive relationships that exist among students, teachers, support staff, and administrators. There is strong evidence that the school is creating and sustaining a learning environment for students that nurtures a sense of caring and belonging. The Visiting Team encourages the staff to continue its efforts to collaborate across departments to foster collegiality and to provide cross-curricular connections for students.

b) To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?

The school actively engages parents in the learning process through a variety of programs. Team Layton Christian Academy, fundraising, classroom volunteers, after-school tutoring, and parent focus groups are examples of efforts made to extend the school community. Guidance counselors actively involve parents in SEOPs, Think Wave, and other programs related to comprehensive guidance.

#### **Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:**

a) To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?

The school's organizational culture supports school improvement initiatives and professional development. The staff has weekly faculty meetings, as well as quarterly in-service and professional development. "Step Up to Writing," a cross-curricular writing program that enhances and strengthens writing skills. It is recommended that the faculty be encouraged to join professional organizations and attend current workshops and conferences for professional growth.

b) To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?

The administration works to develop a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement. Teachers, parents, students, and support staff feel that the administration is receptive to new ideas. Based on the school survey, it is recommended that the school develop a schoolwide discipline plan. In addition, learning effective classroom management skills should be a part of ongoing professional development.

It is suggested that Layton Christian Academy use disaggregated data from the SAT and other testing instruments to verify that the Utah Core Curriculum is being taught and that students have gained sufficient mastery of the core concepts.

# CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI

#### Standard I – Educational Program

This standard is met. Layton Christian Academy's instructional and organizational practices, as well as its policies and procedures, support the desired results for student learning and prepare students to succeed in a culturally diverse, democratic society.

#### Standard II – Student Personnel Services

This standard is met. Student personnel services are designed to give systematic assistance to students.

#### Standard III – School Plant and Equipment

This standard is met. The school plant provides for a variety of instructional activities and programs, and incorporates aesthetic features that contribute to a positive educational atmosphere.

#### Standard IV – Library Media Program

Layton Christian Academy has not met this standard; however, the work is in progress and should be completed by February 2005.

#### Standard V – Records

This standard is met. Student records are maintained, handled, and protected in the best interest of students and parents.

#### Standard VI – School Improvement (This is addressed in the self-study.)

This standard is met. The school improvement plan focuses on the total school rather than each of the separate components within the school.

#### **Standard VII - Preparation of Personnel**

This standard is not met. Not all teachers are licensed and endorsed for their assignment; however, certification is in process.

#### Standard VIII - Administration

This standard is met. The administration of Layton Christian Academy provides educational leadership, supervises and coordinates programs, and carries out the necessary administrative procedures.

#### Standard IX – Teacher Load

This standard is met. The total number of students instructed by any one teacher in any one grading period does not exceed numbers set by the Utah State Office of Education and/or the NAAS.

#### Standard X – Activities

This standard is met. Layton Christian Academy supports a range of activities that supplement the basic instructional program.

#### Standard XI – Business Practices

This standard is met. The school is financially responsible. Proper budgetary procedures and generally accepted accounting principles are followed for all school funds. The school's advertising and promotional literature are completely truthful and ethical.

#### CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

a) To what extent is the schoolwide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?

The schoolwide action plan is adequate in the following ways: (1) The faculty is very conscientious about the State Core writing requirements and is working to strengthen that part of the Core Curriculum. (2) The school community is working toward building a more adequate and functional physical space at the school. (3) The faculty is actively researching possibilities for added elective courses and honors classes, to further strengthen the school's core curriculum. (4) The school community is making a concerted effort to offer more opportunities in the fine arts area of the curriculum. The above aspects of the school action plan align with the DRSLs in the areas of effective communicator, resourceful thinker, and lifelong learner. The school profile, department reports, and focus groups provided the staff with an adequate picture of the school's areas for growth. The Visiting Team's recommendations, in addition to the school action plan, provide workable goals to enhance school improvement.

b) To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, schoolwide and system-wide?

The administration, teaching staff, and parent community share a strong commitment to the action plan. The staff is encouraged to focus its efforts on those areas that will directly affect student learning as these areas fulfill requirements of the Utah State Core Curriculum. The school mission, goals, and DRSLs confirm that the administration and staff are committed to developing the whole child, including the spiritual, emotional, academic, social, and service-oriented aspects of every student at Layton Christian Academy.

c) How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the schoolwide action plan appear to be?

The follow-up process for the proposed action plan is logical and is already being implemented. The administration and staff have done a good job of creating commitment to the action plan. They continue to be data-driven and are

knowledgeable and courageous enough to make adjustments to the plan when the feedback indicates a need for adaptation or course correction.

## CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

#### **Commendations:**

- There is very effective communication to the parents from the school. Layton Christian Academy sends a newsletter called the "Thursday Note" home each week, with the students or by e-mail. The newsletter addresses current news in each classroom and includes a message from the administrator.
- The Visiting Team commends the staff for implementing a very effective self-study process. The process included numerous opportunities for parent and student input, and an extensive amount of time was contributed by teachers and administrators regarding the impact of their work on student achievement.
- The Visiting Team commends the staff and administration for their dedication to the school, the students, and the educational process. It was evident from the visit that the Layton Christian Academy school community cares about the students and parents it serves, and is willing to continually grow and learn on their behalf. There is a strong and positive academic learning climate and a culture of high expectations for the students.
- The acceptance of students from different cultures, nationalities, religions, and socioeconomic status in the school community is commendable.

#### **Recommendations:**

- It is recommended that Layton Christian Academy adopt a schoolwide discipline plan, as well as the option of classroom management training for new and veteran teachers.
- Because Layton Christian Academy welcomes students from varying educational and socioeconomic backgrounds, a special education department would offer additional support to the regular classroom teacher. A special education teacher would help to meet the needs of students who read below grade level and have other specific educational needs.

•	It is recommended that the faculty continue to adhere to the Utah State Core Curriculum and develop electives and honor courses that further strengthen core standards.